

607 This Week in *Science*

Editorial

609 To Lift the Lamp Beside the Research Door

Letters

610 Space Flight: Manned Versus Unmanned: J. R. ARNOLD; B. BOVA; J. H. LAUB;
J. A. VAN ALLEN

News & Comment

612 Was Galileo Saved by Plea Bargain?

613 The Buried Cost of the Savannah River Plant ■ Down on the Sludge Farm

615 Petersdorf to Head Medical Colleges

616 *Briefing*: House Endorses Pork Barrel Funding ■ Britain Offers Plan for Chemical Weapons Verification ■ OMB and Congress at Odds Over Cancer Risk Policy ■ Britain's Royal Society Condemns Sex Bias in Math Teaching ■ New Animal Regulations Causing Scientists Pain and Distress ■ Time Inc. Buys *Science Digest*

Research News

620 Shifting Sentiments Over Sequencing the Human Genome

621 Tracing a Young and Malleable Moho

623 *Briefing*: Sodium Atoms Trapped with Laser Light ■ Laser-Cooling Mercury Ions Via Beryllium ■ RNA Plasmid Discovered in Maize Mitochondria

Articles

625 Computing with Neural Circuits: A Model: J. J. HOPFIELD and D. W. TANK

633 Arctic Research in the National Interest: A. L. WASHBURN and G. WELLER

640 The Use of NMR Spectroscopy for the Understanding of Disease: G. K. RADDA

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COVER Bell tower of First United Methodist Church in Chatham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, at dawn (6:26 a.m. on 23 June 1986; solar elevation: $12^{\circ}35.4'$ above horizon; natural illuminance levels: 12,200 lux ambient and 6,300 lux in the line of gaze). Exposure to artificial light of comparable intensity can rapidly reset the human circadian pacemaker by about 6 hours. See page 667. [Charles A. Czeisler, Neuroendocrinology Laboratory, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02115]

Reports

- 647 Tandem Regions of Yeast DNA Topoisomerase II Share Homology with Different Subunits of Bacterial Gyrase: R. LYNN, G. GIAEVER, S. L. SWANBERG, J. C. WANG
- 649 The Oncogenic Activation of Human p21^{ras} by a Novel Mechanism: M. WALTER, S. G. CLARK, A. D. LEVINSON
- 652 Immunoregulatory Feedback Between Interleukin-1 and Glucocorticoid Hormones: H. BESEDOVSKY, A. DEL REY, E. SORKIN, C. A. DINARELLO
- 655 Infectious Mutants of HTLV-III with Changes in the 3' Region and Markedly Reduced Cytopathic Effects: A. G. FISHER, L. RATNER, H. MITSUYA, L. M. MARSELLE, M. E. HARPER, S. BRODER, R. C. GALLO, F. WONG-STAAAL
- 659 Probing Steric and Hydrophobic Effects on Enzyme-Substrate Interactions by Protein Engineering: D. A. ESTELL, T. P. GRAYCAR, J. V. MILLER, D. B. POWERS, J. P. BURNIER, P. G. NG, J. A. WELLS
- 663 A Mouse Homeo Box Gene Is Expressed in Spermatocytes and Embryos: M. R. RUBIN, L. E. TOTH, M. D. PATEL, P. D'EUSTACHIO, M. C. NGUYEN-HUU
- 667 Bright Light Resets the Human Circadian Pacemaker Independent of the Timing of the Sleep-Wake Cycle: C. A. CZEISLER, J. S. ALLAN, S. H. STROGATZ, J. M. RONDA, R. SÁNCHEZ, C. D. RÍOS, W. O. FREITAG *et al.*

Book Reviews

- 672 Wild Horses of the Great Basin, *reviewed by* P. J. JARMAN ■ The Miocene Ocean, J. H. LIPPS ■ Properties and Interactions of Interplanetary Dust, B. DONN ■ Some Other Books of Interest ■ Books Received

Products & Materials

- 676 Test Kit for Interleukin-2 ■ Sample Changer for Titrator ■ DNA Recovery from Electrophoresis Gels ■ Personal Supercomputer ■ Fluorometer ■ Fluorescence Microscope ■ Literature

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To Lift the Lamp Beside the Research Door

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your little scientist yearning for a grant,
The wretched refuse of the Budget Battle,
Send them, competition-tossed, to me:
I lift the lamp beside the Treasury door.
(with apologies to Emma Lazarus)*

Those would be appropriate words for a new statue entitled "Miss Enlightened Self-Interest." This high-wage nation is entering the era of the global economy with a science policy that would have any well-trained accountant dying of shame. We analyze, by merciless peer review, the grants of low-income science (in the \$10⁵ range); condemn those who go outside the peer review process for middle-income science (\$10⁷ range); and allow the top brackets of "big science" (\$10⁹ range) to be evaluated by nonscientists. An analogy would be a meticulously itemized office budget: Pencils (\$17.50), Typewriter (\$327.96), and Miscellaneous (\$10,000).

What is the outcome of such a process? At a time when foreign competition in the computer business is at a peak, low energy physics is being cut back in total funds and in dollars per grant. At a time when the infant biotechnology industry needs encouragement and personnel, training grants and postdoctoral fellowships are being reduced and eliminated. At a time when we must create methods to adjust to major demographic shifts both internally and in a changing global economy, social scientists are competing for dwindling funds. At a time when materials science research and new chemical products are needed more than ever, the National Science Foundation, their main source of funding, announces the possibility that summer salaries may be eliminated and that program directors must negotiate downward. At the same time, massive projects with only remote relevance to the national welfare are enjoying favor. "Little science" is being told that it is in a zero-sum game; big science is being told that it is in an infinite-sum game of "add-ons."

Does this mean that we should eliminate big science because of the budget squeeze? Certainly not. Does it mean that relevance must be a sine qua non of basic research? Certainly not. Does it mean that we should reexamine our procedures for scientific priorities? Certainly, yes.

The first step in reevaluation is remembering that little science can be intellectually adventurous and has produced the big breakthroughs—the lasers, the transistors, the recombinant DNA's—which spark totally new directions in research and industrial applications. Thus it is vital in this new era of balanced budgets to establish a priority that ensures healthy support of little science. But we need big projects too, even big irrelevant projects. They are like our national parks, our Statue of Liberty, our voyage to the moon. We must think big, and supercolliders, sequencing the human genome, the space shuttle, and space telescope are goals that challenge our imaginations and organizational abilities. Almost all big science projects are worthy. The problem is that they cost so very much money.

If even one big project were deferred, there would be all the incremental funding needed for little science. Therefore it seems time for truly big science to enter an era of competition with programs of similar size rather than with the much smaller projects of little science. One item that should be compared with the big science projects is the sum of all the incremental cuts in little science.

We scientists will find it difficult to list the diverse projects in a priority order. The least we can do is have peers outside the immediate discipline evaluate the scientific claims of the advocates of big projects so that Congress can place the programs in proper relation to others of similar size.

The time has come to evaluate big projects against each other and against the restoration of cuts in little science in the same way that we evaluate small projects. The republic, through its elected representatives, will and must have the final word. The scientific community, however, should help make that final word an informed decision. In this way, enlightened self-interest can lift the lamp beside the research door.

—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.